

Bakunin, the Franco-Prussian War and After; Civilisation, Internationalism and Change

A. W. Zurbrugg

ABSTRACT

This article sets out some key themes in the thinking of Bakunin (1814-1876), in and around the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. Bakunin set out perspectives on civilisation and rural revolt inspired by a holistic view of change, demanding respect for all producers, for rural and urban cultures and for all peoples. Bakunin criticised Social-Democratic and Marxist perspectives. In his view, Internationalism and solidarity were the touchstone of socialism.

Keywords: *Bakunin, Anarchism, Socialism, Civilisation, rural revolt, Marxism, International, nationalism, war, France, Germany*

When the Franco-Prussian war broke out in 1870, the French ruler Napoleon III was defeated, and his imperial state fell apart. The new French state that began to form was faced by revolts in favour of a Commune-Republic, and the Paris Commune became a symbol of radical and labour revolution. It inspired revolutionaries and sparked revolts in Italy and Spain. Reactionary Europe took fright and launched repression.

These events helped to enflame a fundamental conflict over strategy and perspective between socialists organised since 1864 in the International Workers' Association (IWA), that has endured ever since: what should they work for? what paths should they follow? Wolfgang Eckhardt has concluded that the divergence was about organising, either for social revolution or in electoral parties: 'This can be seen as a decisive moment in the history of political ideas: the split between

centralist party politics and federalist grassroots movements. The separate movements found their greatest advocates in Michael Bakunin and Karl Marx; in this respect, their difference in ideas lives on to this day'.¹ The split is evident in historical writing and political theory; it has given rise to competing political traditions and shaped their animosities, claims and counter-claims in changing historical and ideological contexts. This article sets out Michael Bakunin's views on civilisation, internationalism, war, revolution and rural people, key issues in this debate, contrasting his ideas with those of Marx and Engels.²

Since the 1870s, writers on the IWA have often chosen to review its development by using one of two lenses: one focuses on the IWA as a network of diverse parts and opinions (recorded in international congresses, national institutions and journals)³ often critical of the General Council.⁴ Another focuses on the records of the General Council, perhaps with a 'Marxist' leadership.⁵ Back in the 1870s few contemporaries saw themselves as Bakuninist or Marxists; rather more might have described themselves as 'federalists' (or anti-authoritarians), as against Social-Democrats or advocates of labour electoral-political agitation. Socialist politics was diverse and fluid, not aligned ideologically by an allegiance to Bakunin or Marx. Moreover, Bakunin and Marx engaged with each other more readily through the activities and practice of friends and allies, than they did through their writings, many of which were only published posthumously.⁶ 'Readings' of Bakunin and Marx have gradually shaped antagonistic socialist traditions, perhaps serving as proxies for political movements and conflicts – informed not by polite exchanges in literary journals, but by vituperative private communications and vicariously through the actions of sympathisers. 'Bakuninists' knew 'Marxists' as advocates of national-labour-electoral-party-politics, and as practitioners of electoral accommodations with partisans of liberal-bourgeois and national concerns. Judgements were made not in terms of this or that article, but with an eye to the support given to this strike or that electoral coalition. As disputes became more heated, certain statements were seized on to establish doctrine – while others were left aside. Ideas and histories took shape through confusing and conflicting movements and by schools of political theory, interpretation, and practice. Returning to the historical debates helps identify where the significant differences actually lie.

As regards political theory, Bakunin's writings are still largely inaccessible in English. A useful Bakunin anthology on conflicts in the IWA is available in French – *Les conflits dans l'Internationale*⁷ – but this and much else besides has not been translated into English. In contrast, a Marx-Engels anthology, *The First*

*International and After*⁸ is easily found. To this day no comprehensive edition of Bakunin's writings has been published in English, while works of Marx and Engels have been published in huge print runs with support from state enterprises in Moscow and Beijing. Consequently, English-speakers lack easy and full access to Bakunin's writings and cannot easily compare and contrast them with Marx's texts. This imbalance has helped to fuel and distort conflicting views about nineteenth-century socialism and these key events in the IWA.

While some 'Marxists' have been open to the reconsideration of prejudiced scholarship,⁹ others have continued to be dismissive of Bakunin and anarchism. For example, in a special issue of the journal *Science and Society* Professor August Nimtz asserted that Bakunin and his partisans did not leave the kind of records his rivals did.¹⁰ In another recent anthology Professor Marcello Muso suggested that Bakunin's writings, with one exception, amount to little more than a collection of insults.¹¹

Several recent books provide some useful correctives. Wolfgang Eckhardt's *The First Socialist Schism: Bakunin vs. Marx in the International Working Men's Association*, provides a lengthy account of developments with extensive quotations; Robert Graham has published an anthology: *We Do Not Fear Anarchy – We Invoke it*,¹² and René Berthier has written a critique of Professor Nimtz,¹³ and a text on the history of the International. Issues of nationality, ethnicity, race and war are addressed in two essays in the volume *Actualité de Bakounine 1814-2014, Bicentenaire de Michel Bakounine*. Yet that volume has attracted little or no attention in the Anglophone world, and not so much as a mention in *Anarchist Studies*.¹⁴ In what follows, I draw on the insights in the essay by Philippe Pelletier: 'Bakounine, géopolitique, esquisse', published in that volume.

The Bakunin who worked with the IWA after 1868 is not the same person who had expectations of change on a national scale in Poland or Italy in the early 1860s, or the writer on Pan Slavism active in 1848. Interviewed by Felipe Corrêa, René Berthier says: 'Bakunin's political thinking only became really mature around 1870 ...' Bakunin did not become an anarchist simply by joining the IWA – he matured progressively as he observed and absorbed experiences from the labour movement, benefitting especially from the thinking of César de Paepe. He was deeply affected by the Paris Commune.¹⁵

Given the lack of a comprehensive edition of Bakunin in English, it is not easy to plot the evolution of his thinking. This short article is not the place to remedy these problems; what follows is a short examination of certain key ideas which his critics have consistently overlooked.

CIVILISATION AND CULTURE?

At the sixth congress of the IWA 1-6 September 1873, the six federations present noted that the IWA had spread beyond Europe. The IWA had begun to contemplate labour solidarity globally, not just in the 'civilised world'.¹⁶ This aspiration begged an important question: did capitalist economic development bring civilisation? The extracts from Bakunin's works below show that his answer was 'no'.

Civilised nations' conquest of barbarous peoples: that is their principle. It is the application of Darwin's law [of evolution] to international politics.¹⁷ As a consequence of natural law, civilised nations, being ordinarily the stronger, must either exterminate barbarous people, or dominate them to exploit them, or, so to say, civilise them. So, in such a way, permission was given for North Americans to gradually exterminate Indians, for Britons to exploit Indians of the East, for the French to conquer Algeria and lastly for the Germans to civilise Slavs ...¹⁸

Bakunin also rejected the idea that only the most industrially advanced countries were capable of revolution. Real emancipation depended on all workers, not just the industrial proletariat. Bakunin distinguished between progress, industrialisation and labour interests and resented the systematic disrespect of rural populations propagated by the Socialist-Democrats:

To gather as much one has only to open an issue of *Volksstaat*, the official organ of the party, edited (under Marx's direct inspiration) by Liebknecht. In 1869 and 1870 he published a series of articles in which the following thinking was developed: that the Slavs are an essentially agricultural people, and in consequence reactionary and retrograde. We should exclude them from the International, because they remain strangers to modern civilisation based on capitalist production ...¹⁹

After his escape from imprisonment in Siberia in 1861, Bakunin supported popular, democratic, free Pan-Slavism. When Poland rebelled in 1863, he wrote that only a peasant Poland could bring freedom. Likewise, a free Russia depended on the countryside and *zemstvo* popular assemblies.²⁰

Whereas aristocratic nations and empires sought the subjugation of neigh-

bours, free peasant peoples would have no such ambitions: 'The free Russian people ... will hold out its hand to each and every nationality when they free themselves, and to the Poles first of all'.²¹ 'We will not tolerate any use of force on them [neighbours], but if they wish to join our alliance, they may be assured of our respect for their right to autonomous development'.²² Some peoples²³ might look back to some glorious, mythical past warned Bakunin, but: 'Misery [will be the lot] – of peoples and of individuals – who contemplate their past too much and too long; they weaken both the present and their past; confusing and misdirecting principles makes this dwelling on the past the more harmful'. Turn your back on the past he advised – build a peasant nation. 'It is monstrous, absurd, criminal, *impossible in practice*, to invoke freedom to rebel and, at the same time to oppress neighbouring peoples'.²⁴

In his view, devolution and decentralised democratic (commune) administrations facilitated freedom.²⁵ Bakunin looked back to the French revolution of 1789 and took issue with the creation of a unified national 'Jacobin' state and army. National politics facilitated the centralised and remote rule of the bourgeoisie; watchwords of 'liberty', 'equality' and 'fraternity' were class concepts – reforms that facilitated commerce, trade, and law. There had been little fraternity for urban workers, workplace (union) organising had been forbidden. Jacobins had resorted to the guillotine; they had failed to address the root causes of social inequality.²⁶ Republics were prone to maintain slavery, wage or chattel slavery (as in the USA).

By 1871 Germany and Italy had been unified – with new rulers and generals – but there were no new freedoms for peasant or workers. Referring to the leading light of the Italian unification movement, Bakunin quipped, it was a case of 'the people for Mazzini, not Mazzini for the people'. Giuseppe Mazzini remained a stranger to the popular classes.²⁷ Bakunin wrote: 'Bourgeois patriotism is to my eyes a very shabby, very narrow, above all very selfish, and fundamentally antihuman passion; its object is the power preservation of the national state, i.e. upholding, in the national context, every exploitative privilege'.²⁸ Bakunin looked for societies in which working peoples lived on terms of conviviality and mutual respect; the 'civilisation' perpetuated by elite minorities implied 'public order', i.e. state violence.²⁹ In contrast, the rights of all peoples meant:

an absolute freedom for all parts to unite or not, all the while preserving for each part freedom to leave a union, even after it had once freely given

its consent – from bottom to top, in line with real needs and the natural tendencies of [various] parts, through the free federations of individuals, associations, communes, districts, provinces and nations in humankind.

INTERNATIONALISM, ETHNICITY AND WAR

Internationalism should be considered the touchstone of Bakunin's socialism. He observed solidarity between diverse peoples in Geneva in 1868-69 especially in construction workers' strikes.³⁰ That solidarity was imperilled when groupings of prosperous-citizen-IWA members used promises of no-strike-agreement to negotiate places for themselves in local government.³¹ Foreigners heard locals saying *you* are guests in *our* home, be grateful for our help. Bakunin and others replied: 'there could be no "foreigners" in the International. Gratitude and unity were no doubt very fine things, but such things should not create servitude; ... better to separate, rather than to become a slave'.³²

Aware of ethnic tensions in areas where Germans and Slavs met, He made the following observation:

The entire history of Germany is really a struggle against the Slav race. Prussia, the keystone of the Germany's current power, is nothing but a cemetery for Slav peoples.³³ All Germans believe instinctively that it is their mission to civilise, that is to say to germanise Slavs; an illusion that may entail bitter consequences ... The hatred that Germans have stirred in every Slav heart makes for the unity and strength of Slav peoples, and has given birth to pan-Slavism.³⁴

How then could a harmonious society evolve? The Austro-Hungarian empire was an unstable patchwork of cultures and languages. In 1869, Bakunin approved of the newly formed Party of Socialist Democracy because it served a universal socialist interest and had 'no Germans, no Slavs, no Hungarians, no Italians, no French, no English – just people – their friends, if they were workers, enemies if they were bourgeois exploiters and rulers'.³⁵ Workers had no need for national states, even on the decentralised Swiss model; Bakunin called for a broad, voluntary federation of communities.

Pan-Germanism and pan-Slavism are equally detestable, but – turn and turn again – each produces the other, they are as great enemies, and as inseparable

as church and state. To destroy pan-Germanism and pan-Slavism only one means will do: to drown them both, simultaneously, in humanity as a whole, through the abolition of the state.³⁶

Bakunin believed that progress towards socialism was a complex matter proceeding on several levels. For example, federalism – devolution of decision making – was needed, but also international labour solidarity. He recognised the various forms of slavery and forced labour in Africa, Asia, the Americas and elsewhere, including wage-slavery. The rapid expansion of the USA he wrote, was explained by the appropriation of vast tracts of land for plantation labour. The provision of land for former slaves would be a measure of practical socialism.³⁷ Some ten years later his colleague James Guillaume would respond to concerns about the usage of ‘cheap’ Chinese labour in American watch-making, Guillaume wrote: ‘It is not in declaring war on Chinese workers that American workers will escape ruinous competition from them, but in building a solidarity of interests between these two categories of the exploited and in forming a common alliance against exploiters’.³⁸

As Pelletier notes, ‘Bakunin envisaged social and political phenomena in terms of vast relations of force, within which the economy was just one component part’.³⁹ In 1872, he drafted a letter to *La Liberté*,⁴⁰ setting out his differences with ‘Marxists’ over the range of factors influencing historical development:

Marx completely ignores a most important element in the historic development of humanity, that is, the temperament and particular character of each race and each people, a temperament and a character which are themselves the natural product of a multitude of ethnological, climatological, economic, and historic causes.

In contrast, Engels had written of ‘counter-revolutionary *nations* of Europe’, and that ‘hatred of Russians was and still is the primary *revolutionary passion among Germans*’. In his view: ‘in history nothing is achieved without violence and implacable ruthlessness’.⁴¹ This ‘Marxist’ vision – saw *nations* – some supposedly revolutionary and others supposedly counter-revolutionary – warring with each other. According to René Berthier, Marx and Engels believed that:

a European revolution was imminent – not through a proletarian revolution, but rather a bourgeois revolution which would break up absolutist states and facilitate the advent of the liberal bourgeoisie and the installation of universal suffrage, and by virtue of that, the proletariat, being the predominant class, would achieve its political dominance.⁴²

Libertarians sensed the gaps in Marxist strategy. In the abstract there was a recognition that the Paris Commune had shown that working people could not simply use old bourgeois states and that something else should be put in place,⁴³ but the alternative was considered impractical. As Marx argued: ‘With a small amount of sound common sense, however, they [the Communards] could have reached a compromise with Versailles useful to the whole mass of the people – *the only thing that could be reached at the time*’.⁴⁴ In his polemic ‘The Bakuninists at Work’, Engels suggested that in Spain progress towards socialism would proceed through several stages. He suggested that if a labour minority were elected to the *Cortes* (legislature) it might be large enough ‘to decide the issue’ whenever it came to a vote between the two wings of the Republican bourgeoisie.⁴⁵

‘Marxist’ strategy, at this stage, was to form national labour electoral-parties, to get working people elected and – in terms of everyday practice – for labour to work with radical segments of the bourgeoisie. The election, in 1874, of a few Social-Democrats to the *Reichstag* (German legislature), along with a many more deputies with business, managerial and landowning interests, was hailed by Engels as a great success, placing: ‘the German proletariat at the head of the European workers’ movement’.⁴⁶

Libertarians saw things differently – they saw little value in working people having party members in a legislature, or with having working people co-operate with the radical bourgeoisie: ‘We entirely distrust them. Workers know what the word federalism means, in the mouths of the bourgeoisie; they know how much hypocrisy the political exploiters of the masses are sheltering, behind the name *republic*’.⁴⁷ Libertarians observed what happened when IWA members joined local government: they lost touch with the labour movement and its interests. Bakunin wrote that the idea that the bourgeoisie would help the proletariat implied that the former would commit class suicide – and this was inconceivable. He repeated arguments that he had been making since August 1869: ‘To conquer political freedom first can mean nothing other than conquering it first and alone; leaving, at least in the first days, social and

economic relations in their existing condition – so misery for the workers, and insolent wealth for the landlords and capitalists’.⁴⁸

Perspectives on change varied somewhat, influenced by political and economic experience and development. Germany still had some quasi-feudal structures even after 1871, so a national republic might appear as modern and progressive in that context. Four years later, the ‘Gotha’ Programme of the newly-united Social Democratic Party was reviewed in the *Bulletin de la Fédération Jurassienne*: ‘The German people demand in 1875 what the French people achieved in 1793’, with a few extra things: a fixed working day, restrictions on child and female labour, state controls on factories, state support for co-ops, etc. The *Bulletin* commented: ‘One might take note that these dispositions in the economic sphere are entirely consistent with a Jacobin spirit, simply placing the issue of Labour on the agenda and within the domain of the legislature, to open a new chapter in the national and political state constitution’. The Jacobins were enemies, they were indeed the ‘parents’ of today’s revolutionary federalists, but although their project, (now almost a century old), might be continued, it also needed correcting (*Bulletin*, 28 March 1875).

Libertarian revolutionary socialists noted that the republics of France, Switzerland, and the USA, might be modern, and might foster economic development, but argued that they lacked ‘freedom’; their freedom was a fiction – working peoples lacked education, leisure and independence⁴⁹ – so a programme more radical than social-democracy was needed. This difference explained Bakunin’s disagreement with Marx. Rather than regarding a bourgeois revolution on the model of 1793 as progress, he argued that there was an urgent need to push on, and promote a social uprising in France, to build the energy needed to repel Bismarck’s invading forces. In 1870-71, Marx and Engels still saw ‘1793’ as an aspiration – Germany needed a bourgeois revolution to sweep away Germany’s small states, and to introduce national unity. There were different goals and methods, too: for Bakunin the social and economic power of working people was to be rooted in labour organisation in the community and workplace. Marx and Engels focussed on the promotion of party building, something that privileged the settled male, artisan citizen, and that left out in the cold non-voters – the precarious, the migrant, the non-citizen and in this era all women.

Engels often used the development of the German nation as his yardstick when it came to defining what was revolutionary or counter-revolutionary. Bakunin thought this was dangerous rubbish. He wrote that a Pan-German Empire was a one and indivisible patriotic *prison*.⁵⁰ Later, Marxist writers such as

Roman Rosdolsky criticised Engels for his views on 'non-historic' peoples, (such as the Czechs) recognising the value of Bakunin's conclusions while criticising his methods.⁵¹

In later years nationalist themes loomed large in the German Social-Democratic movement. In 1907, August Bebel, speaking as a leader at the Essen Social-Democratic congress, commented that Russia was the 'enemy of all culture and of all the oppressed, not only in her own country, but also the most dangerous enemy of Europe, and especially for *us Germans*.'⁵² His view posited 'us' against 'them', Germans against Russians, conflating progress with German nationalism.⁵³ This conflation had long horrified libertarians. In 1870, Bakunin had judged the Socialist-Democratic Workers' Party (SDWP) and its programme in these terms:

*It was the creation of an exclusively German state that was posed in the first article of their programme as the main and supreme aim of the SDWP. They are above all political patriots. So then, what is left of Internationality? What would these German patriots contribute to the international fraternity of workers of every land? Nothing but socialist words ...*⁵⁴

Bakunin accused German Social-Democrats 'of marching and acting not in concert but in parallel with Bismarck, taking different paths but having the same goal as him'. In his view, Social-Democrats believed that only the German 'race' – including the Anglo-Saxon peoples of Britain and America, and those of the Netherlands and Scandinavia – possessed the energy to spread and develop. In consequence, they were incapable of acting on behalf of broader humanity.⁵⁵

WAR

A series of wars had taken place in the 1860s involving Austria-Hungary, Denmark, France and the various states of Germany and Italy. Bakunin wrote: 'there will be wars as long as there are permanent armies, and of necessity there will be permanent armies as long as states exist'. Those who desire peace should seek the destruction of states.⁵⁶ The issue of war had been discussed in several international IWA congresses.⁵⁷ In 1868, at the Brussels congress, it was resolved that a general work stoppage should be organised if war was declared.⁵⁸ Marx wrote to Engels to deride 'Belgian nonsense that it was necessary to strike against war'; both men advocated opposition to dynastic wars, but perhaps

thought parliamentary protests were a proper channel, not mass organisation.⁵⁹ Bakunin regarded the idea of a people's state, as advanced by many German Social-Democrats, as a contradiction in terms – camouflaging the domination of a few 'scientific' experts over the masses.⁶⁰ He saw national states as pernicious; tending inevitably towards animosities between peoples and towards military expansionism.

Bakunin defined regular soldiers as the guardians and first servants of the state, educated if not to hate, at least to despise the working classes.⁶¹ Spanish libertarians developed these sentiments and published an appeal in *La Federación* (Barcelona, 1 March 1873), asking soldiers to revolt, to become 'legitimate sons of the people', working to support the aspirations of the proletariat.⁶² Reworking the famous principle of the IWA, it wrote: 'The *defence* of the workers should be the work of the workers themselves', each Commune should be ready to defend itself, together they would form a united Commune army (*Federación*, 14 June 1873).

In France some units of the National Guard rallied to support radicals, especially when officers and NCOs were elected and where soldiers were recruited from poorer and popular areas, such as Paris. The regular army was based in barracks, but National Guards lived at home, and were in closer touch with popular opinion. The Guard had one or two women members, too, notably Louise Michel.⁶³

When the war broke out between Prussia and Napoleonic France the Swiss Jura IWA paper, *La Solidarité* (16 July 1871), commented: Will a campaign on the Rhine resolve the Social question? When you return home will you not be just as exploited as you were yesterday?⁶⁴ The occupation of Northern France by German troops was characterised by Bakunin as 'a military, monarchical and aristocratic, invasion. The five of six hundred thousand German soldiers now throttling France are obedient subjects, slaves of a despot infatuated with his divine rights'.⁶⁵ Bakunin perhaps hoped that Germany might be subverted, but he had little confidence in the fortitude of German radicals. He feared despots, and the regular army discipline that they sponsored, seeing them as: 'an instrument of oppression, one that was as stupid and brutal as much as ferocious, a machine to crush the world'.⁶⁶ The war of 1870, brought menace, slavery, devastation, burning, sacking, massacres, rapes, and the killing of children.⁶⁷ This invasion, like the invasion of Spain and Russia by the forces of the Napoleon Bonaparte, might spark a mass, popular movement – an uprising without rules or regulations, undirected by a superior authority. The French state (be it Napoleonic or

republican) was impotent and could not defeat invaders. Only a mass rising could counter Bismarck. Such a rising needed a secure rear area and mass support. As the Prussian army marched to encircle Paris, Bakunin urged Albert Richard to remember Danton's words in 1793, and to remove the influence of the bourgeoisie: 'Before marching against the enemy, they must be paralysed and destroyed behind us' – we must, wrote Bakunin, put down the Prussians within, in order to have confidence and security to fight against the Prussians without.⁶⁸

A rising might develop in various directions – and events in Poland in 1863 highlighted one error to be avoided: there, the nobility had prevailed over the peasantry. Once rural workers had seen their concerns disregarded, they had lost interest and stood down. In 1871 with that in mind, Bakunin looked for co-operation between all working people; rural workers were to be encouraged to support urban working people, together building a radical, decentralised Commune-Republic, with mass armed citizen-militias. In sum, Bakunin feared inter-state national wars. Early in 1872 he wrote:

[There may be] a struggle of nations and races: on the inside, the most iniquitous exploitation; on the outside, the most bloody and the most complete negation of humanity and in consequence the most tyrannical oppression. A struggle to the death might arise between the different European races – Latins, Germans and Slavs – to decide which of the three would conquer, enslave, annihilate and/or absorb the other two ... this terrible ethnic struggle would necessitate a formidable deployment of military forces, militarism – with its every ramification and its inevitable political, social enmities, would be the order of the day. And no longer would there be professional armies separate from the people, no it would be entire people themselves that would be transformed into permanent armies, thrust beneath salutary military discipline, such as we see already today in Germany and Prussia.⁶⁹

Bakunin had no magical powers to predict the future. His views on liberation focussed on European peoples; on occasion he wrote about 'shadowy and religious' peoples in Africa and Asia coming to freedom through the influence of trade, and/or the influence of modern civilisation.⁷⁰ His global perspective has been characterised as naively Eurocentric.⁷¹ Some of his views were clearly ill-founded and misconceived.⁷² However, in the light of two world wars, his fears of German expansionism and militarism were prescient.

REVOLUTION AND RURAL PEOPLES, PARTISAN POLITICS

Bakunin looked forward to the defeat of Napoleon III when war broke out in 1870 between France and Prussia just as he had earlier looked for the defeat of the armies of the Tsar in any wars that they might undertake.⁷³ When Napoleon III was defeated, and when much of France was occupied by German invaders, the situation changed. A new – social – Republic might be formed. How were those invaders to be repelled? Would arms be distributed to the people? What should be done if a government came in and refused to provide arms?

‘Bakunin’, wrote James Guillaume, ‘from the first news of German successes, seeing clearly all the painful consequences of the triumph of Bismarck and his politics for civilisation and socialism, thought only of one issue: by what means to spark social revolution in France in order to oppose the menace of a Bismarck dictatorship’.⁷⁴ On 5 September 1870, *Solidarité*, the journal of the Jura IWA Federation, published a Manifesto, declaring: ‘Republican France represents European freedom, monarchical Germany represents reaction and despotism. Republicans everywhere should rise up and march to the defence of the French republic’. Guillaume was not attempting to defend a nationalist Jacobin republic but rather argued for an emerging and universal *social* and Commune-Republic. On the same day Bakunin wrote:

Is a rising [in the provinces] still possible? Yes, if the workers of the large Provincial cities, Lyon, Marseille, St Etienne, Rouen, and many others have blood in their veins, if they have energy at heart and strong arms, if these men are alive, and revolutionary socialists, and not doctrinaire socialists.⁷⁵

Bakunin defended ‘a French spirit, of generous and heroic instincts, and of the revolutionary audacity’. He had anticipated exciting times – as when ‘an electric current had affected an entire society and people are touched with similar feelings’. Revolution in France and unrest in Germany would, he hoped, emancipate the whole of Europe.

If it [France] falters, it will be lost and defeated. Along with the proletariat of Europe they will be sentenced to at least fifty years of slavery. They will be lost. If today they gave their consent to submit to the Prussian yoke one cannot imagine that later they will be able to find the strength, will, and intelligence, needed to accomplish a Social Revolution.⁷⁶

His revolutionary intuitions were partially realised as local revolts, especially the Paris Commune, excited working peoples. He wrote that the programme of the Commune demanded:

the abolition of the state and the reorganisation of society from bottom to top, working through a free federation of labour associations and communes, and with a threefold basis: equality, work and collective property – as regards land, instruments of work and everything that constitutes an input by big capital into agricultural, industrial, commercial, artistic or scientific production, leaving as property for individuals only those objects which are really theirs for personal use ...⁷⁷

In September 1870 Bakunin judged that revolt was timely, and that it could start in provincial cities (Paris was being encircled by Prussian forces). His views contrasted with those of Marx and Engels. They called on French citizens to make use of whatever ‘Republican liberty’ that new state might permit,⁷⁸ and to do their ‘duty’ to the republican-state-in-formation.⁷⁹ Their watchword *Vive la République!* was ambiguous: Whose republic? Dominated by which classes? Marx and Engels advised neither rebellion, nor co-operation between ‘have-nots’ and ‘haves’, but their policy implied some measure of subordination for working people – service in the French army and inaction until the German army withdrew from France.

Bakunin advocated a very different policy. Lyons was an obvious focal point for the IWA. There was a tradition of dissent in the area, and little support for the government of Napoleon III. Earlier, in March 1870, the local IWA had been able to promote a meeting of 6,000 supporters there. These internationalists advocated the formation of a Social Republic, a Commune-Republic. Bakunin travelled to Lyons and joined in the proclamation of that rebel Commune-Republic. There was a call for a Central Committee for the Safety of France, which he wrote, was ‘a revolutionary socialist committee in the widest sense of the word’.⁸⁰ The Lyons rebels called for similar committees from every departmental town to send two delegates to form a Revolutionary Convention for the Safety of France, to meet in Lyons and to promote the energetic defence of the country, drawing on the energy of the entire people to save France.⁸¹ Hence, a new Commune-Republic waging a mass, revolutionary social war. If France was to be saved, the initiative now had to come, not from a besieged Paris, but from the provinces, and the task of conscious revolution-

aries was not to issue decrees but to excite mass activity.⁸² However, this call to arms failed, and after 28 September 1870 radicals and internationalists were dispersed. Bakunin had to go into hiding before returning to Locarno (Switzerland).

Bakunin recognised that supporters of rebel Communes would come from different backgrounds and with different ideas. When the Paris Commune was formed, he welcomed the rebel Jacobins who fought to defend it. He himself however thought that 'today's socialist revolutionaries can imitate very little, or nothing, from the Jacobin revolution of 1793. They have to work with actual life, they have to create everything. Revolutionary routine would be fatal'.⁸³ But he reasoned that these allies needed time to reconsider their ideas. Also, he advised urban supporters of a Commune-Republic to be very careful as they approached peasants.

Anyone whose heart beats for the victory of the Social Revolution must deplore the harmful separation that exists between the proletariat of the towns and the proletariat of the countryside. Their every effort must work to destroy it, because we must all be aware of this: so long as workers on the land do not give a hand to workers in the cities, for common revolutionary action, every effort of the urban revolutionaries will be condemned to inevitable fiasco. The entire revolutionary question lies here, one must resolve it or perish.⁸⁴

The task is to establish a line of conduct which turns difficulties around; which will not only will prevent peasant individualism that pushes them into the party of reaction, but which, on the contrary, will work with them to promote the victory of the revolution.⁸⁵

Bakunin expressed similar concerns as the International began to make an impact in Italy. He wrote several polemics against Mazzini – using the pen name of 'An Internationalist'.⁸⁶ He stressed the importance of inciting the rural masses: 'The entire future of your country depends on which side your peasants will support in the coming revolution'.⁸⁷ Conversely, Bakunin doubted the revolutionary potential of settled layers of skilled workers – in his view a Social-Democratic party might easily become: 'as a state, a fictional collective leader for the millions who cultivate the land, holding a new political power, that of workers in urban manufacturing industry imposing themselves as a governing class ...'⁸⁸

Engels, in contrast, stressed cross-class, state-centred, partisan-party and national factors: 'The whole mass of the German people of *every class* have realised that this is first and foremost a question of *national existence ...*' and 'Bismarck, as in 1866, is at present doing a bit of our work for us ...' '*The French need a thrashing*. If the Prussians win, the *centralisation of the state power* will be useful for the centralisation of the German working class'.⁸⁹ In the same vein: 'the German working class is superior to the French'⁹⁰ both theoretically and organisationally. Their predominance over the French on the world stage would also mean the predominance of our theory over Proudhon's, etc.⁹¹

A centralised national power centre was anathema to Bakunin. In the crisis of 1870, as France reacted to the dissolution of the Napoleonic regime, and German occupation, he saw an opportunity for labour to reinvent a 'natural' France – beyond any 'official' organisation.⁹² He viewed Bismarck as the leader of reaction leaning on a bureaucratic machine,⁹³ armies, support from the bourgeoisie and from rural Germany:

This immense [peasant] mass is today the great fortress of reaction, the formidable axis on which Mr Bismarck's lever can turn, a menace to the liberty of all of Europe; and this came about through the fault of the bourgeoisie, which on three different occasions repelled and repressed the spontaneous uprising of German peasants – firstly in 1520, then in 1830, then in 1848. So a dangerous and formidable opponent will confront this abstract German socialism.⁹⁴

Bakunin wrote of a 'historic, national physiology', popular awareness and education did not coincide, peoples learnt and developed in line with need and experience, 'through historical experience, through centuries of trials and living and rather less through books and science'.⁹⁵ In France the people had been corrupted by the bourgeoisie – tempted towards indolence, lacking passion, preferring peace-and-slavery. He looked for the mass popular risings – spontaneous, energetic, and passionate, anarchic, savage, and destructive. Revolutionary communes should come together in a federal organisation to defend France.⁹⁶ The political sense of many Germans was, wrote Bakunin, much inferior to the sense of illiterate persons in France and England.⁹⁷

When civil conflicts broke out in Republican Spain in 1873-4 the German navy intervened seizing ships that might otherwise have protected rebel coastal cities. In 1871-2, Bismarck released French troops to help the Versailles govern-

ment's repression of the Paris Commune. Such interventions supported Bakunin judgement that Bismarck's victories had not brought 'German independence',⁹⁸ but rather accentuated reaction and power through the new German state.

Engels judged Bismarck's power as useful since it facilitated German national unity, along with the interests of his party and Marxist *theory*. This focus on *theory* has endured down the years. So, for example Professor István Mészáros once argued:

The internal troubles of the First International – despite the fact that it was still under *the tirelessly dedicated intellectual and political leadership of Marx* – became increasingly more pronounced in the last few years of the 1860s. As a result by 1872 Marx was forced to transfer its organizing center to New York in the soon-to-be-disappointed hope of preserving its firm international orientation and bare existence ...⁹⁹

OF DISAPPOINTMENT AND LEADERSHIP

There was indeed some disappointment about the behaviour of the new body in New York. Marx and Engels had defined what they wanted: 'an instrument in our hands',¹⁰⁰ to secure 'the predominance of our theory'. For them 'life-and-death feuds'¹⁰¹ were normal and inevitable. Their actions conformed to these words. In 1871 they had abused a conference¹⁰² to reshape the IWA, and then at The Hague, they had created a fictitious majority to expel individuals. Now, seeing New York as the headquarters of their army, they demanded more vigorous action and full use of powers¹⁰³ by General Secretary Friedrich Sorge. On 2 September 1873, at the next IWA congress, the veteran Russian revolutionary, Nicholas Joukovsky observed:

The newly elected General Council, now located in New York, as the faithful – but perhaps unintelligent – executor of Marx's orders, suspended the Jura Federation. Immediately the Internationalists of England, Italy, Belgium, Spain ceased to correspond with the Council. It kept its title as General, but it remained a General without soldiers.¹⁰⁴

For the former army officer (Engels) ridding themselves of soldiers-with-a-mind-of-their-own made some sense. Perhaps in this sort of 'Marxist' parlance 'organising' was something predicated on the view that real organising depended

on a correct theory – irrespective of results, opposition, or the neglect of the IWA's injunctions for morality, justice, and truth. A 'firm international orientation', (some sort of Hegelian ideal) was in their mindset 'destined' to direct the organised labour movement – through political warfare.¹⁰⁵

Evidently the mass of the IWA rejected not just these self-appointed generals, but also their military model. Former friends and allies (Carlo Cafiero, Johann Eccarius, John Hales and Hermann Jung) joined the ranks of Marx/Engels' critics. These and other contemporaries had closely observed a self-proclaimed 'Marxist leadership' flouting democratic procedures, obstructing congress norms, and disrespecting critics' experience and judgement. For members of the IWA and others beyond its ranks, solidarity in everyday workplace struggles was the key test of socialism, and the misnamed New York 'organizing center' (as István Mészáros called it) was irrelevant to it.¹⁰⁶ Solidarity, as Bakunin had long been recognised, was key:

The basis for this greater [IWA] unity will not be found through vain searches amongst current philosophical or political ideas. It is to be found readily formed in the suffering, [common] interests and needs, in developing solidarity, and in the real aspirations of the proletariat throughout the world. This solidarity exists in reality ...¹⁰⁷

While Marx and Engels might celebrate that they possessed IWA files,¹⁰⁸ critics resented that they had falsified and edited out policies set by General Congresses.¹⁰⁹ Critics had to defend themselves against a 'Marxism' shaped for ideological warfare, flying the (false) flag of 'scientific socialism'. Bakunin noted: 'Mr Marx was drawn on by his furious hatred, ... assumed the role of police agent, public slanderer and informer'.¹¹⁰ Regarding Marx's wars against 'sects' (any currents that opposed them), Wolfgang Eckhardt notes, 'this can be seen as part of a long line of attempts to isolate and marginalise others in order to establish his own programme'.¹¹¹ Bakunin, rather than promoting that destructive style, welcomed debate: 'The International does not fear discussion, it seeks it'.¹¹²

Diversity is life. Disciplined unity kills nations, within whatever circles it may be established; it comes only with effects that are detrimental to life and creative spontaneous thinking. What we all want is living unity, one that is really powerful, one that is created by freedom, through free expression, in lively diversity; expressing itself in struggles, as every living force looks for

harmony and equilibrium. I can understand how a General of a regular army division adores the deathly silence that discipline imposes on a crowd. Your Generals, our Generals, the people's Generals have no need for the silence of slavery; being used to living and leading in the midst of squalls they are never so tall as when they face those squalls.¹¹³

For the ongoing IWA, the role of international congresses was not to legislate policy, or to set out a line, but to bring different viewpoints together, to learn from different experiences and thereby to work towards more harmonious international understanding – these things might build solidarity. Anarchists have been criticised for concealing hidden conspiratorial networks.¹¹⁴ Bakunin did 'conspire' with others in the sense of seeking to push a point of view but that pushing had limits – influence was sought, but not power and domination, through authoritarian, militaristic or hierarchal organisations.¹¹⁵

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Bakunin's thinking about civilisation, culture, ethnicity and war show that he regarded internationalism and solidarity as the touchstones of socialist identity. Those who saw 'their' nation as superior to others were, in his view, guilty of abandoning socialism for nationalism. The crisis of 1870-3 marked the birth of a distinct libertarian socialist tradition. Taking inspiration from Bakunin, libertarians looked for not just self-managed socialism, and the end of capitalism, hierarchies of state and military power, but also for an alliance of urban and rural labour, communalism, and internationalism.

The pertinence of Bakunin's insights became more evident after 1914. China and Mexico would show the potential for radical change in peasant countries; while events in Russia after 1918 would demonstrate that disrespect for rural people had engendered a police state – subjugating peasant peoples and bringing appalling consequences – as Bakunin had feared. Also important were his perspectives on 'advanced' labour movements. Bakunin had seen socialist energy dissipated and misdirected, where progress was conflated with support for the development of modern industry and 'civilised' states and disrespect for the 'backward' and the 'uncivilised'. He would have been unsurprised to see 'socialists' supporting wars to defend 'progress'. The mass killings of the First World War drew on patriotic tendencies that he had combated some fifty years earlier.¹¹⁶ In 1914, Germany's libertarians and syndicalists would oppose 'their'

nations' nationalism and war-mongering – but their strength was tragically inadequate, and they were unable to counter the majority Social-Democratic tradition. In the view of libertarians, the growth of national Social-Democratic traditions¹¹⁷ marked a setback and an obstacle, impeding progress towards socialism.

A.W. Zurbrugg is a bookseller and publisher. His 'Socialism and Strategy: A Libertarian Critique of Leninism', was published in *Anarchist Studies*, in 2014. He is also the author of '1917 and the "Workers" State': Looking Back', *Socialist Register 2017*; and *Anarchist Perspectives in Peace and War, 1900-1918*, published in 2018.

NOTES

- 1 Wolfgang Eckhardt, *The First Socialist Schism: Bakunin vs. Marx in the International Working Men's Association* (Oakland, 2016), pp418-420.
- 2 I am indebted to René Berthier for several insights in the text below and thank the anonymous reviewers and others who have helped improve this text.
- 3 Some contemporary journals are online e.g: *Bulletin de la Fédération Jurassienne*, <https://archivesautonomies.org/spip.php?article75>, and *La Federación*, (Barcelona) <http://mdc2.cbuc.cat/cdm/search/collection/federacion/>
- 4 James Guillaume, *L'Internationale: documents et souvenirs 1864-78*, (Four books) (Paris: Société nouvelle de librairie et d'édition and Stock, 1905-1910); Jürgen Herres has written that we should view the IWA as a network of different European groups of workers and reformers, whose annual meetings in Switzerland and Belgium should be regarded as the birthplace of European socialism. Fabrice Bensimon, Deluermoz Quentin and Jeanne Moisand, Eds, *Arise Ye Wretched of the Earth: The First International in a Global Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), p301.
- 5 'some declared Marx the actual leader of the International who was mainly concerned with enforcing Marxism ...' Jürgen Herres, 'Karl Marx and the IWA', *ibid.*, p304.
- 6 Jean-Christophe Angaut, 'Marx, Bakounine et la guerre franco-allemande', *Cahiers Sens Public*, Association Sens-Public, 2005.
- 7 *Bakounine, Les conflits dans l'Internationale: 1872*, Arthur Lehning (ed.), Antony (France), Tops-H. Trinquier (ed.), 2003; previously published in Leiden, by Brill in 1965, and in Paris by Champ Libre, in 1975; this is one volume in a set of *Œuvres complètes*. A CD provides the fullest set of Bakunin texts: Michel Bakounine, *Oeuvres complètes (CD)* (Amsterdam: International Institute of Social History,

- 2000). Many references below are to this CD. French language texts can be found online, e.g. via archive.org and https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Auteur:Michel_Bakounine; the latter is derived from a six volume set: Michel Bakounine, James Guillaume (ed.), *Oeuvres* (Paris: P.V. Stock, 1895-1913). Among anthologies in English are: *Michael Bakunin*, Arthur Lehning (ed.), *Selected Writings* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973); *Bakunin on Anarchy*, Sam Dolgoff (ed.), (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1993) and *Mikhail Bakunin*, A.W. Zurbrugg (ed.), *Selected Texts 1868-1875* (London: Anarres, 2016).
- 8 Introduced by David Fernbach, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974); republished by Verso in 2010.
 - 9 See Roman Rosdolsky, 'Engels and the "Nonhistoric" Peoples', *Critique*, No. 18-19 (1986): 185.
 - 10 'Marxism versus Anarchism: The First Encounter', in *Science & Society*, Vol. 79, 2 (April 2015): 154, note 2. There are further exchanges between Professor Nimtz and this writer, in subsequent issues of the journal.
 - 11 Marcello Musto (ed.), *Workers Unite! The International 150 Years Later* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p51. For a critique by 'Anarcho', see anarchism.pageabode.com/anarcho/review-workers-unite-international-150-years-later
 - 12 Robert Graham, *We Do Not Fear Anarchy – We Invoke it* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2015).
 - 13 René Berthier, *Social-democracy and Anarchism in the International Workers Association, 1864-1877* (Talgath: Merlin Press, 2015), and René Berthier, "Science & Society", Mr A.H. Nimtz & Bakunin', http://monde-nouveau.net/IMG/pdf/mr_nimtz_bakunin_03-02-2018.pdf.
 - 14 Philippe Pelletier (Ouvrage collectif), *Actualité de Bakounine 1814-2014, Bicentenaire de Michel Bakounine* (Paris: Editions du Monde Libertaire, 2014).
 - 15 Interview with Felipe Corrêa, February 2012, <https://www.anarkismo.net/article/22864>; see also René Berthier, *Allemagne et question slave*, <http://monde-nouveau.net/spip.php?article170>
 - 16 The IWA's statutes had contained a reference to European labour; following a discussion on 3 September 1873, the words 'of Europe' were deleted in recognition of the development of new IWA sections beyond Europe.
 - 17 'Bakunin has an erroneous vision of Darwinism, the law of evolution is not something that applies to the strongest, but rather to the being that adapts best'. Interview with René Berthier, July 2020; *Le Travailleur*, edited by libertarians in Geneva in 1877-78, (after Bakunin's death in 1875), carried more in the way of global information.
 - 18 'To the Jura comrades' (February-March 1872), in Mikhail Bakunin, *Selected*

- Texts 1868-1875*, A.W. Zurbrugg (ed.), (London: Anarres, 2016), p176. In contrast Marx and Engels wrote in the *Communist Manifesto*: ‘The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation’.
- 19 Paragraphs extracted from ‘L’Allemagne et le communisme d’état’, translated in Mikhail Bakunin, *Selected Texts 1868-1875*, op. cit., 2016, p182.
 - 20 ‘Narodnoe delo, Romanov, Pugachev ili Pestel?’, text 62006_et, June-July 1862, in Michel Bakounine, *Oeuvres complètes (CD)* (Amsterdam: International Institute of Social History, 2000); *Statism and Anarchy*, Marshall Shatz (ed.), (Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp203ff.
 - 21 ‘A mes amis russes et polonais’, *Kolokol*, 15 February 1862, text 62002_et, in *Oeuvres complètes (CD)*.
 - 22 ‘Aux frères slaves de la part de la société panslave’, *Kolokol*, 15 August 1862, text 62007aet, in *ibid*.
 - 23 Bakunin advised peoples against dreams of a Greater Poland, Greater Germany, or Greater Hungary.
 - 24 ‘A mes amis russes et polonais’, op. cit; see also Mikhail Bakunin, *Selected Texts 1868-1875* (London: Merlin/Anarres, 2016), p178.
 - 25 ‘Fédéralisme, socialisme et antithéologisme’, in Michel Bakounine, *Oeuvres*, Vol. 1 (Paris: P.V. Stock, 1895).
 - 26 ‘L’Empire Knouto-Germanique et la Révolution Sociale. Manuscrit qui précédait le manuscrit de l’appendice novembre 1870’, text 70031bef, in Michel Bakounine, *Oeuvres complètes (CD)*, op. cit.
 - 27 ‘La situation italienne’, October 1866, text 66005-et, in *ibid*.
 - 28 ‘Prospects for Socialism’ 1870, in Bakunin, *Selected Texts*, op. cit., p74.
 - 29 Histoire du Socialisme, 8, 1870-71, text 00025HEF, in Michel Bakounine, *Oeuvres complètes (CD)*, op. cit.
 - 30 Then, as now, a high proportion of non-citizens lived in Switzerland; to stay they had to obtain residence permits and pay an annual levy.
 - 31 ‘Writings against Marx’, November-December 1872, in Bakunin, *Selected Texts*, op. cit., p241.
 - 32 ‘Rapport sur l’alliance’, (On the Alliance), August 1871, in Bakunin, *Selected Texts*, op. cit., p167.
 - 33 In ‘The Magyar Struggle’ (*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, January 1849) Engels wrote: ‘the Austrian Germans and Magyars will be set free and wreak a bloody revenge on the Slav barbarians. The general war which will then break out will smash this Slav Sonderbund and wipe out all these petty hidebound nations, down to their very

names. *The next world war will result in the disappearance from the face of the earth not only of reactionary classes and dynasties, but also of entire reactionary peoples.* And that, too, is a step forward', Marx & Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, 1977, p227; our emphasis.

- 34 'To the Jura comrades' (February-March 1872), in Mikhail Bakunin, *Selected Texts 1868-1875*, op. cit., p182.
- 35 'L'agitation du parti de la démocratie socialiste en Autriche', *L'Egalité* (Geneva), 19 June 1869, text 69025-cf; on Vienna see also: 'L'Allemagne et le communisme d'Etat', March 1872, text 72006-cf; both in Michel Bakounine, *Oeuvres complètes (CD)*, op. cit.
- 36 Mikhail Bakunin, *Selected Texts 1868-1875*, op. cit., p182; see also: 'The Programme of the Slav Section in Zurich', pp216-220.
- 37 'Fédéralisme, socialisme et antithéologisme', in Michel Bakounine, *Oeuvres*, op. cit., pp21-22, 29, 50, 157-58, 172. (Were these 'empty' lands?); it seems that Bakunin was unaware of the growth of 'white' terrorism after the end of the American Civil war.
- 38 James Guillaume, *L'internationale, documents et souvenirs* (Paris: nouvelle de librairie et d'édition, 1907), Vol. 2, Part 5, chapter 11, p264.
- 39 Philippe Pelletier: 'Bakounine géopolitique, esquisse', in Philippe Pelletier (ed.), *Actualité de Bakounine 1814-2014*, op. cit., p133.
- 40 In Sam Dolgoff (ed.), *Bakunin on Anarchism*, op. cit.
- 41 'Democratic Pan-Slavism', (1849) in Marx & Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8 (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), p378; Engels is replying to a Bakunin text, 'Appeal to the Slavs' of 1848, see *Bakunin on Anarchy*, Sam Dolgoff (ed.), (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1993), pp64ff.
- 42 René Berthier, *Allemagne et question slave*, <http://monde-nouveau.net/spip.php?article170>
- 43 *Bulletin*, 9 November 1873, defined the difference between a bourgeois government and a Commune in terms of permanently revocable delegation, defined by clearly determined mandates. The Saint-Imier congress spoke of: 'federation can only be the consequence of spontaneous action by the proletariat itself, of trades organisations and autonomous communes ...'; on state socialism see also, the final chapter of Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*, op. cit., pp181ff.
- 44 Letter to Domela Nieuwenhuis, 22 February 1881, emphasis added.
- 45 Marx & Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23 (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1988), pp581-83.
- 46 Ibid, Vol. 45, p6.
- 47 *La Federación*, 21 June 1873.

- 48 *L'Égalité*, 28 August 1869, Bakunin, *Selected Texts 1868-1875*, op. cit., p53; *Statism and Anarchy*, op. cit, final chapter.
- 49 'La situation politique en France' (Letter to Palix), 29 September 1870, text 72029-ef, in Bakounine, *Oeuvres complètes (CD)*, op. cit.
- 50 'Democratic Pan-Slavism', *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, February 1849, <https://marxists.catbull.com/archive/marx/works/1849/02/15.htm>; see also: letter Engels to Marx 30 July 1869; and Bakunin: 'Etatisme et anarchie', text 73004_et in *Oeuvres complètes (CD)*, op. cit; Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*, op. cit, pp45ff.
- 51 Roman Rosdolsky, 'Engels and the "Nonhistoric" Peoples, op. cit., pp156ff. See also 'Bakunin sur les Slaves', *Blanik*, 4-9 (1868, Berlin), Josef Václav Frič (trans.), text 62008et, in Michel Bakounine, *Oeuvres complètes (CD)*, op. cit..
- 52 *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands* (Berlin: 1907), pp254-5. For a broader discussion of these issues see: 'James Guillaume: 'Karl Marx Pan-German and the International Workers' Association' (1915)', <https://www.infolibertaire.net/james-guillaume-karl-marx-pan-german-and-the-international-workers-association-1915/> and <http://monde-nouveau.net/spip.php?article659>
- 53 There were times when Engels was clearer, differentiating between the Russian people and the Tsarist state.
- 54 'Letters to a Frenchman' (1870), Bakunin, *Selected Texts 1868-1875*, op. cit., p83, my emphasis.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 'Projet d'une société internationale et révolutionnaire', 1866 or 1868, variant 1, text 1_bef, in Michel Bakounine, *Oeuvres complètes (CD)*, op. cit.
- 57 'To the Jura comrades' (1872), Bakunin, *Selected Texts 1868-1875*, op. cit., p170.
- 58 Jacques Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 1, (Geneva: Droz, 1962), p404.
- 59 Marx & Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 43, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1987), p101; see also letter to Bebel, Vol. 45, p62.
- 60 'the pseudo-popular-state will be nothing but a despotic government of the popular masses by a narrow new aristocracy of genuine or not so genuine scholars', Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*, op. cit, p245; and 'Ecrit contre Marx', November-December 1872, text 72019-ef, in *Oeuvres complètes (CD)*, op. cit.
- 61 'Sur l'Europe', 1876, text 76001_ef, in Bakounine, *Oeuvres complètes (CD)*, op. cit.
- 62 Document 17, in *Antología Documental del Anarquismo Español*, http://www.cedall.org/Documentacio/IHL/Antologia%20Documental%20del%20Anarquismo%20espanol_V%20I.pdf
- 63 Guillaume Davranche, '1870: Faire la guerre et la révolution, avec Bakounine à Lyon', *Alternative Libertaire*, 28 September 2020, <https://www.unioncommunistel->

- ibertaire.org/?1870-Faire-la-guerre-et-la-revolution-avec-Bakounine-a-Lyon
- 64 James Guillaume, *L'internationale, documents et souvenirs*, op. cit., Vol. 2, Part 3, Chapter 3, p66.
- 65 Quoted in Bakunin, *Selected Texts 1868-1875*, op. cit., p71.
- 66 'Sur l'Europe', 1876, op. cit.
- 67 'La situation politique en France' (Letter to Palix), 29 September 1870, op. cit.
- 68 Letter, 23 August 1870, James Guillaume, *L'internationale, documents et souvenirs*, op. cit., Vol. 2, Part 3, Chapter 3, p81.
- 69 'L'Allemagne et le communisme d'Etat', March 1872, text 72006-ef, in *ibid*.
- 70 'Réponse d'un International à Mazzini' (La théologie politique de Mazzini et l'Internationale), text 71014-ef, in *ibid*.
- 71 René Berthier, *Bakounine, colonialisme et impérialisme*, http://monde-nouveau.net/IMG/pdf/bakounine_colonialisme_et_imperialisme12-01-2017.pdf
- 72 Future events would show that Bakunin was greatly in error on some points. In many texts he conflated Germans and Jews. He also transferred faults that he found in particular persons (friends of Marx) as typical of Jews in general. His friends (e.g. Alexander Herzen) criticised such views, and in subsequent years so too did other libertarians, e.g. Anselmo Lorenzo, *El proletariado militante*, Vol. 1, (Bilbao: Zero, 1974, first published 1901.)
- 73 'Discours prononcé au Congrès de la Paix et de la Liberté, deuxième séance', 10 September 1867, text 67007_ef, in *Oeuvres complètes (CD)*, op. cit. Bakunin wrote that he would have welcomed an invasion of workers (be they British, German, etc). 'Lettre à un Français. Continuation III, 27 August 1870', text 70021-cef, in *ibid*.
- 74 James Guillaume, *L'internationale, documents et souvenirs*, op. cit., Vol. 2, Part 3, Chapter 3, p79.
- 75 Text 70022-bef, 'Lettres à un Français sur la crise actuelle. 2', 5 September 1870, Michel Bakounine, *Oeuvres complètes (CD)*, op. cit.
- 76 'Letters to a Frenchman', (Prospects for Socialism), August-September 1870, in Bakunin, *Selected Texts 1868-1875*, op. cit., pp75, 73, 76. See also, 'La situation politique en France' (Letter to Palix) 29 September 1870, op. cit.
- 77 'Article français' for *La Révolution Sociale*, 7 January 1872, Text 72003-ef, in Michel Bakounine, *Oeuvres complètes (CD)*, op. cit.
- 78 See the Address written by Marx and Engels and published on 9 September by the IWA General Council: 'The German working class has resolutely supported the war, which it was not in their power to prevent, as a war for *German independence* and the liberation of France and Europe from that pestilential incubus, the Second Empire' ... 'The French working class moves, therefore, under circumstances of extreme difficulty. Any attempt at upsetting the new Government in the

- present crisis, when the enemy is almost knocking at the doors of Paris, would be a desperate folly. The French workmen must perform *their duties as citizens*; but, at the same time, they must not allow themselves to be deluded by the national souvenirs of 1792, as the French peasants allowed themselves to be deluded by the national souvenirs of the First Empire'. Marx & Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1986), pp267, 269, emphasis added.
- 79 Although some parts of the French state were broken, army officers and some officials, followers of Napoleon III, remained in place, See, 'Lettre à un Français' (Appendix of 30 August 1870) and 'L'empire knouto-germânique et la révolution sociale', (première livraison) in Michel Bakounine, *Oeuvres*, James Guillaume (ed.), Vol. 2, op. cit., p250, 298.
- 80 Bakunin, *Selected Texts*, op cit., p91.
- 81 Ibid, p93.
- 82 Michel Bakounine, *Oeuvres*, James Guillaume (ed.), Vol. 2, (Paris: P.V. Stock, 1907), pp214, 228.
- 83 From: 'Lettres à un français sur la crise actuelle, (appendice)', and from 'Préambule pour la seconde livraison de L'Empire Knoutogermanique', June 1871, both in Bakunin, *Selected Texts 1868-1875*, op. cit., pp101, 107-111. See also Arthur Lehning, 'Michel Bakounine: théorie et pratique du fédéralisme anti-étatique en 1870-1871', *International Review of Social History*, Vol. 17, 1 (1972): 455-473. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/44594923. Bakunin appears to have had little to say about military technology, and the capacity of working people to counter the armed forces of the state.
- 84 'To the Jura comrades' (1872), Bakunin, *Selected Texts*, op. cit., p183.
- 85 'Lettre à un Français. Continuation III, 27 August 1870', text 70021-cef, in *Oeuvres complètes (CD)*, op. cit.
- 86 See, Antje Schrupp, 'Bringing Together Feminism and Socialism in the First International: Four Examples', in Fabrice Bensimon, Deluermoz Quentin and Jeanne Moisand (eds), *Arise Ye Wretched of the Earth*, op. cit., pp348. Bakunin's polemics against Mazzini were praised by Engels, Engels had the bitter experience of finding out from Cafiero that he had – unknowingly – praised Bakunin! Another polemic against Mazzini was written by Virginie Barbet.
- 87 'To the Jura comrades' (1872), Bakunin, *Selected Texts*, op. cit., p185.
- 88 Ibid., p183
- 89 Letter of Engels to Marx, 15 August 1870. Our emphasis. http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1870/letters/70_08_15.htm; letter 31 July, Marx & Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 44, op. cit., p18; letter, 4 August 1874, Vol 45, p30.
- 90 See lines from this letter, as published by IWA members in Brunswick on 5

September 1870, quoted by Bakunin: 'The historic centre of gravity has passed definitively from France to Germany by virtue of the victories accomplished by German troops; we too, as Germans, etc ...' See the Marshall Shatz edition of his *Statism and Anarchy* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp189ff; Marx & Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p262. Bakunin was not as well briefed as Engels on military matters. Prussia's victory was greatly aided by its superior war machine, notably its Krupp artillery.

- 91 Marx to Engels, 20 July 1870, *Collected Works*, 1989, Vol. 44, p3, our emphasis.
- 92 'Lettre à un Français, Continuation III, 27 August 1870', text 70021-cef, in *Oeuvres complètes (CD)*, op. cit.
- 93 'Lettres à un Français sur la crise actuelle, No. 5', 9 September 1870, text 70022-eef, in *ibid.*
- 94 'To the Jura comrades' (1872), in Bakunin, *Selected Texts*, op cit., p176; Bakunin wrote that 'Marxists' Pan-Germanism prompted their hostility to peasant revolts in Germany, because that peasant rebellion might have taken on a (rural) Slav essence.
- 95 'La science et la question vitale de la révolution', March 1870, text 70010_et in *Oeuvres complètes (CD)*, op. cit.
- 96 'Lettre à un Français. Continuation III, 27 August 1870', text 70021-cef, op. cit.
- 97 There were substantial IWA workplace organisations in Belgium, France, Italy and Spain despite persecution, but not in Germany. Bebel declared that Germany's internationalists had never paid dues to London, (*Volksstaat*, 16 March 1872, p1); see also a comment that many Germans were sixty years behind: 'Lettre à un Français' (appendix of 30 August 1870), Michel Bakounine, *Oeuvres*, James Guillaume (ed.), Vol. 2, op. cit., p249.
- 98 See endnote 74.
- 99 István Mészáros, 'Reflections on the New International', *Monthly Review*, February 2014. <https://monthlyreview.org/2014/02/01/reflections-new-international/> our emphasis.
- 100 'when the next revolution comes, and that will perhaps be sooner than might appear, we (i.e. you and I) will have this mighty instrument in our hands', Marx to Engels, September 11, 1867, in *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1987), p424.
- 101 See Engels letter to Bebel, 20 June 1873, 'Incidentally, old man Hegel said long ago: A party proves itself victorious by splitting and being able to stand the split. The movement of the proletariat necessarily passes through different stages of development; at every stage part of the people get stuck and do not participate in the further advance; and this in itself is sufficient to explain why the 'solidarity of the proletariat', in fact, everywhere takes the form of different party groupings, which

- carry on life-and-death feuds with one another ...' Marx & Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 44, op. cit., p514.
- 102 Conferences had no rights to reshape the IWA – from a mainly workplace organisation, to a political party – The last, 1869 IWA congress had passed a resolution concluding: 'that the creation of resistance funds should be promoted and workplace organisations should come together in national trades' federations, for common action, until such time as waged-work is replaced by the Federation of Free Producers'. Political parties were not even mentioned. Jacques Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 2, (Geneva: Droz, 1962), p109.
- 103 Marx to Bolte, 12 February 1873, 'In order to strengthen the International in those countries where the struggle is chiefly being carried on, what is needed above all is vigorous action from the General Council. Now that the mistake has been made with the Jura ...' *Collected Works*, Vol. 44, p476. The General Council was criticised for merely suspending, rather than immediately expelling federations.
- 104 See *Report on the Sixth Congress of the IWA*, (London: Anarres/Merlin Press, forthcoming).
- 105 Re Marx's complaint that Lasalle had *stolen* his ideas, Bakunin noted: 'a very odd protest on the part of a communist, one who supported collective property ...', 'Etatisme et anarchie', text 73004_et in *Oeuvres complètes (CD)*, op. cit. In September 1874, when Engels noted that the IWA was finished (because Sorge had been ousted in New York), he was pleased to note: 'What good fortune that we did not send the minute books over!', Marx & Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 45, pp43, 51.
- 106 On 4 September 1873, at a public session of the IWA congress, IWA members confronted non-members who alleged that the Jura Federation had refused non-members solidarity for a strike in Geneva. They were given chapter and verse on donations made. Thereafter both sides exchanged letters as strikes occurred. See *Report on the Sixth Congress of the IWA*, (London: Anarres/Merlin Press, forthcoming).
- 107 'Writings against Marx', November-December, 1872, in Bakunin, *Selected Texts*, op. cit., p232.
- 108 Letter, Engels to Marx, 21 September 1874, in *ibid*, p51.
- 109 Marx and Engels only attended one IWA congress – one where the agenda was not circulated in advance and where blank credentials were used to create a congress majority.
- 110 'a flagrant violation of the most basic principles of justice', letter 4 October 1872, from Russian friends of Bakunin, see, Bakunin, *Selected Texts*, op. cit., p221.
- 111 Wolfgang Eckhardt, *The First Socialist Schism*, op. cit., p83. The practice of Marx and Engels fed into the model of Bolshevism elaborated later by Lenin and Stalin.

- 112 'Article français', 7 January 1872, text 72003-ef, in *ibid.*
- 113 Bakunin, *Selected Texts*, op. cit., pp205-06.
- 114 E.g: Marc Vuilleumier, 'L'anarchisme et les conceptions de Bakounine sur l'organisation révolutionnaire', in in *Anarchici e anarchia nel mondo contemporaneo: Atti del Convegno Torino, 5, 6 e 7 dicembre 1969*, (Turin: Fondazione Luigi Einaudi, 1971).
- 115 See, Alexandre Skirda, *Facing the Enemy: A History of Anarchist Organisation from Proudhon to May 1968*, (Edinburgh & Oakland: AK Press, 2002).
- 116 See: René Berthier, *Kropotkine et la Grande Guerre, les Anarchistes, la CGT et la social-démocratie face à la guerre*, (Paris: Editions du Monde Libertaire, 2014); Guillaume Davranche, *Trop jeune pour mourir*, (Paris: Libertalia & L'Insomniaque, 2014); and Anthony Zurbrugg, *Anarchist Perspectives in Peace and War, 1900-1918*, (London: Merlin Press, 2018).
- 117 Franz Mehring resisted the Social-Democratic majority and their support for the Kaiser, he was a critical Marxist rather than a true-believer.